

that Almighty to every man, woman, and child is freedom.

I love to share the story, and I'm sure some of you have heard this before—but the story about my friendship with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. He's the guy that we went down to Elvis's place in Memphis with. He is a good pal. He's no longer in power, but when he was in office, right after the attacks of September the 11th, he clearly saw the dangers and the opportunities. He saw the dangers that hopelessness was the only way that these ideologues could recruit suicide bombers. And he knew that the United States of America and our allies must be firm in our resolve to bring the terrorists to justice and, at the same time, spread the blessings of liberty.

And what's interesting about this story is that he was the leader of a country that my father fought against some 60 years prior. Think about that. Eighteen-year-old Navy Ensign George H.W. Bush, like many of your relatives, signed up to fight the Japanese. As a matter of fact, the war was so bitter that our vocabulary had slur words in it about the Japanese for years after the war ended. They were the hated enemy.

And yet 60 years later, his son, the son of a Navy fighter pilot, was at the table talking with the Prime Minister of the former enemy about the peace. Something amazing took place. And what happened was, Japan adopted democracy, a system of government with liberty at its core.

My friends, freedom is transformative. Freedom can transform an enemy into an ally. And someday, an American President will be thanking this Congress for its steadfast support of liberty, because he'll be sitting down at the table talking about keeping the peace for generations to come, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I thank you for coming. I thank you for your prayers. May God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:38 p.m. at the Hilton Washington Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Trace Adkins and Sam Moore.

Remarks at the Kuwait-America Foundation's Stand for Africa Gala Dinner

March 12, 2008

Thank you all. Mr. Ambassador, thank you for the invitation. You've got a beautiful place here. [*Laughter*] Rima, thanks very much. I'm honored to be with you. I'm a little late because Laura had me watching "Father of the Bride." [*Laughter*] And in that I didn't finish it, I'm going to make my remarks short and go home and watch it. It's going to be a big year for us. So the guy comes to see me, and he says, "I want to marry your daughter." I said, "Done deal." [*Laughter*]

It's also a big year for us because I'm absolutely convinced the momentum that we have started on the continent of Africa in dealing with HIV/AIDS or malaria is going to continue on for a long period of time. And I want to thank you all very much for supporting the initiative.

I do want to say something about our Secretary of State. I can remember early on in my administration—she was the National Security Adviser then—and she said, "I presume you're going to pay attention to Africa." And I said, "That's a good presumption because I believe to whom much is given, much is required." And the United States of America has been given a lot. And I firmly believe we're required to respond to human tragedy when we see it.

And there's nothing more tragic than a young baby dying because of a mosquito bite. And so I come to you optimistic about this initiative and thankful for the folks who are supporting Malaria No More. I too want to thank Ray Chambers for his leadership. I like it when people do well in the business world and then, rather than retire, decide to put something back into society. That's exactly what you've done, and we're very grateful for doing what you're doing.

I see Justice Alito is here. That's good. Hey, Sam, good to see you.

Youssou N'Dour—so, Youssou, I've been practicing my dancing recently—[*laughter*—and singing. [*Laughter*] And I'm available for a few tips. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the members of my Cabinet who are here and Members of Congress. I

too want to thank Admiral Mike Mullen for serving as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and his wife, Deborah. It's amazing to be the Commander in Chief of a group of people that are dedicated, selfless, and courageous like our military. And Admiral Mullen represents the very best of the U.S. military. I thank the diplomatic corps who is here as well.

So my friends in Texas say, "You know, don't we have enough problems here at home?" And my answer is, "We're wealthy enough and we're strong enough and we're good enough to take problems—take on problems here at home as well as in other parts of the world." And then I remind them that we're living in a very difficult period in the history of the world. After all, we're witnessing an ideological struggle between those who kill the innocent to achieve political objectives and those who believe in human dignity and human rights and human freedom.

And it's a tough time, and it's going to take awhile to prevail. But one thing is for certain, that this enemy we face cannot possibly find recruits based upon their vision. Their vision for life is so dark and so dim and so degrading that it's impossible for them to recruit unless they find hopeless situations. And there's nothing more hopeless for a mother to see a baby die needlessly. And there's nothing more hopeless than a pandemic that sweeps through a continent.

And so the initiative, the Malaria No More initiative, first and foremost, is a part of our efforts to make sure that peace prevails in the long term. And it's working; it's amazing. Admiral Ziemer is here. This guy can get the job done. See, I—one of the things that we pride ourselves on in this administration is, we like to not only be talkers; we like to be doers. We like to set out an agenda and then see to it that the agenda is accomplished.

And working on this malaria initiative, we can measure. You can measure how many nets have been purchased and distributed, how many pills have been distributed, how many countries have been affected. When we were in Tanzania, we were told that Zanzibar, which is a part of Tanzania, went from having their babies infected by malaria at the tune of 20 percent to 1 percent in 18 months. And so I am the kind of fellow that says, this is

in our interests, and I expect the monies that we're spending to be spent well and to be spent wisely. And they are.

It's also in our moral interest. Our Nation is a better nation when we help people save lives. The collective will of the American people to help somebody who suffers, who they might not ever know, lifts our national spirit. And so on our trip to Africa, I tried to make sure that the people of Africa understood this wasn't a George Bush initiative or a Laura Bush initiative or a Condi Rice initiative; this was an initiative of the most compassionate people on the face of the Earth, the American people.

And you're helping this initiative go forward. And so I've taken a breather from the movie to come by—[laughter]—to thank you very much for standing strong with the forces of goodness and light and compassion. And the work you're doing is necessary, and it's important, and it's succeeding. And I hope you take great heart in that.

Thanks for letting me come by to say hi, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:22 p.m. at the residence of the Ambassador of Kuwait to the U.S. In his remarks, he referred to Kuwait's Ambassador to the U.S. Salim al-Abdallah al-Jabir al-Sabah and his wife, Rima al-Sabah; Raymond G. Chambers, founder, Malaria No More; musician and activist Youssou N'Dour; and Rear Adm. R. Timothy Ziemer, USN (Ret.), U.S. Malaria Coordinator.

Remarks on Intelligence Reform Legislation

March 13, 2008

Last month, House leaders declared that they needed 21 additional days to pass legislation giving our intelligence professionals the tools they need to protect America. That deadline passed last Saturday without any action from the House.

This week, House leaders are finally bringing legislation to the floor. Unfortunately, instead of holding a vote on the good bipartisan bill that passed the United States Senate,